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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



Idols vs. Idyls

OR

The Philosophy of Successful Politics.

JAS. ARMSTRONG, JR.

*In the present controversy between the United States and England concerning Venezuela many valuable hints may be found. Patriotism is the talismanic word with which all conjure. On the merits of the political question, scarcely a regiment could be raised. It is not the boundary line between British Guiana and Venezuela, for thousands, who would go to war, do not know the countries are contiguous; nor is it the Monroe doctrine that stirs their valor, for there are daily papers that do not understand its scope; and as to Americans fighting for freedom's sake, the idea is too keenly humorous for serious consideration. It is by representing England as a robber nation that the American people may be urged to play Ulysses to her Polypheme. The shades of Washington and Jackson, and those of the hosts who fell the martyred heroes of liberty at Lexington and New Orleans, are evoked in the enslaving awe of the witch scenes in *Macbeth*. Flag, country, national honor and integrity are the magic words by which America may be arrayed against British arms, or enslaved by British gold. A real war with England is not a probability of the present time, since she could as well afford to bombard Liverpool as New York, but the reformer may find in the diplomacy of the present administration the means of practical procedure in the rehabilitation of republican institutions.*

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JAS. ARMSTRONG, JR.

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1896.

TO
LOUIS A. FREED.
MY FRIEND,
A MAN WITHOUT PREJUDICE AND WITHOUT
PRIDE; AND A FRIEND IN THE
MOST EXALTED SENSE
OF THE WORD,
THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS DEDICATED.

TO THE READER:

THERE are but two ways to be rid of the evils which threaten our existence as a republic—one of which is through the ballot, the other through civil war. Every one, except him who has gold for sale, is alarmedly aware of the necessity of immediate action if republican institutions are to survive. And being a worshipper of Janus rather than of Mars I have undertaken, in the following pages, a logical consideration of the most available means of a peaceable solution of present national difficulties.

Theoretically, nation-building is an easy task. Truth finds ready access to every well-ordered mind. But truth is not always capable of practical results when the means of its fulfillment consists wholly of an assumed constancy of human effort. The tailor may cut a model garment, and yet not one man in a thousand could wear it. And those philosophers who offer mankind an ideal social State, as a refuge from the calamities of existing institutions, will fare even worse than the garment-maker who would shape his wares according to the form of Apollo of Belvidere. The question that presents itself, therefore to the statesman, is of what *may be*, rather than of what *can be*. And since the success of a cause cannot be predicted from the number of its professed adherents, he should be loth to engage in the promotion of utopian schemes; hazarding as he does, thereby, in the event of failure, the deepening of popular discontent, and a probable sequence of revolution. The hope of plunder and the spirit of mercenary warfare would enlist those who suffer as they should fight, in common brotherhood, upon one side as often as justice and a sense of duty, upon the other. In the present crisis *Force* would be a most uncertain experiment. In its event, the Republic might become a second *Rome*, and a prolonged era of civil darkness, worse than medieval night, follow an invasion of *barbarians*.

The safety of republican institutions lies in peaceable procedure. And peaceable procedure means the adoption of such issue, or issues, as will unite the anti-plutocracy element as thoroughly as practicable. The writer, notwithstanding his ideas of civil government have been received from a school of socialism which holds that *money is a positive evil*, regardless of the quality quantity or kind, believes nevertheless that *Finance* is the *issue*. No other issue, it seems to him, will enlist the support of the masses more effectively, and he invites you to a careful perusal of the following pages "for the faith that's in him."

IDOLS vs. IDYLS.

I

POLITICS is the science by which the affairs of men are directed to their own good or evil through the instrumentality of their prejudices and passions. As a science it is exact, rather than speculative. Its fundamental axiom—men shape their purposes to the attainment of selfish ends—is a rule without an exception and of universal application. The Esquimaux and Patagonian, the American and Mongolian differ as widely in manners, laws and customs as in geographical situation. But beyond the accidents of environment the lines of their dissimilarity converge into a homogeneous whole which we call humanity.

Innumerable are the shrines at which men kneel, immortality is the dream of all. Multitudinous are the pursuits of life, the dollar is their common goal. Countless are the social and civil institutions of mankind, happiness is the pursuit of each and every one.

Love, honor, pride, loyalty and patriotism are simply variations of the generic term, Egoism. Among the different races of men it manifests itself according to their development. In the hands of the cannibal it places a bludgeon; in the hands of the financier, a bond.

The dusky daughter of the forest is won by the scalps that adorn her lover's belt; the pale-faced heiress of our eastern cities is enthralled by the titles with which her fortune hunter encumbers his name. 'Tis Hiawatha and her "brave," Consuelo and her "duke." In decency the Savage takes precedence, but in principle they stand upon an equal footing. John the Baptist lost his head through the vanity of Herodias; the American people are suffering the evils of a second administration of her lord, urged into it as it is said of him by Mrs. Cleveland.

Throughout the range of human action, crime and virtue own a common origin. From Abel's murder to the latest bond sale, from Nero to Cleveland, from those who pray facewards Mecca to those whose eyes are turned to Buzzard's Bay, from those who bow to sticks and stones to those who worship the "Gold Reserve;" from the Ashantee warrior to the modern democrat, from Judas and Ananias to Sherman and Carlisle—the inspiration of all human effort, whether blessing the world with liberty and love, or filling it with tyranny and crime, was born of the instinctive self-concern by which all men are directed regardless of the capacity in which they act.

In obedience to the canons of self-interest all progress has been made. This fact is particularly exemplified in the lives of successful politicians. No public enter-

prise nor private scheme can be achieved on the vicarious plan. The most notable instance of the trial of such a plan is the most striking example of its failure. For notwithstanding Christ died to save the world, no one need go to heaven early to avoid the rush. There will be crowns and robes of just his size, and untouched harps as numerous as the mistakes of the democratic party. Millions of men have lived and died since the scene at Calvary who never heard of Christ, nor the divine indecencies of Samuel Jones. And if Jesus had played Jones to the Roman rabble, built an orphan asylum, donned the toga virilis and gone about the country assailing the short comings of the multitude in the language of the tavern and brothel instead of preaching to them the unheeded doctrines of non-resistance and the utter disregard of worldly goods, he might have now and then been greeted with a shower of ovarian antiquities, but he would have escaped the bloody sweat in the garden of Gethsemane, the crown of thorns and crucifixion. Civilization might have been spared a thousand years of the cruelest superstition, during which time the inhuman spirit of monasticism filled the earth with darkness and death in the attempted realization of theological absurdities. And had christianity not departed from the unintelligible sophistries which were so fruitful of heresy and crime during the early centuries of its existence, the gates of hell would have long since prevailed against it. Arraying itself at first in the garb of the most austere simplicity, visiting an unnatural hatred upon every object of national and popular esteem, despising the material objects of veneration of the old paganism and seeking to establish itself through

the unaided means of prayer and self-denial, it became at last a new paganism. "Patron saints assumed the offices of household gods. St. George took the place of Mars. St. Elmo consoled the mariner for the loss of Castor and Pollux. The virgin mother and Cecilia succeeded Venus and the Muses. The fascination of sex and loveliness was joined to that of celestial dignity; and the homage of chivalry was blended with that of religion."

Reformation is not a pendulum striking the hours of greater human happiness with unfailing regularity. It is rather an avalanche, growing gradually in ponderous proportion until no longer capable of abiding in its resting place it rushes precipitately downwards, crushing every thing which stands against its progress. Mankind cannot suddenly be brought wholly to rid itself of any evil by which it is even knowingly afflicted. Built therefore as they are upon the prejudices of countless generations—sixty centuries of law and custom interposing present tyranny and future justice—the reformation of existing institutions is to be accomplished by strategy rather than by science. Not strategy in the sense by which is meant the game that cunning tricksters play for stolen gain, but strategy in the sense of generalship that has given to the romance of the world, which we call history, its heroes. The greatest victories of war are not those wherein superior numbers award a triumph. Commanded by genius and disciplined by valor—three hundred will leave posterity the memory of a Thermopylae. And the substantial victories of peace are no more the result of sheer force than are those of war. Whenever Justice petitions Might it is well if she may successfully appeal to arms; but her greater glory is to do

through peace, that which through force, must end in failure. And civil liberty is beholden more to peace than force for the progress it has made.

The rise of existing institutions, like the beginning of geological eras cannot be traced to any particular period of time. Their origin is lost in the shadow of the ages gone. We are born under an established and ever-changing order of things. In youth the voice of enthusiasm inspires us to undertake the realization of its exalted ideal. Enraptured of the true a Rienzi strikes for freedom, and tyranny the object of his glorious but over-reaching zeal, laughs to see it find a victim in himself. A Bruno, whose soul is warmed by every impulse, pure and good, would quench inquisitorial fires with the tears of love and freedom. In the end he finds that they are vain to stay the flame that feeds upon himself. Mankind neither demands nor appreciates the martyr. Self-sacrifice is a tribute to be paid to the gods alone. For heroes, such as Winkleried, the poor honors of martyrdom are theirs—a monument and pilgrim, now and then—the centuries come and go, and tyranny and priestcraft hold their own.

Not so firmly as of old 'tis true. The fagot and the rack have been laid aside. Men are freer now to speak their thoughts; to pray to what they please. But we have received the progress that has been made from Luthers and king Henries, men who made Truth the vassal of Ambition and enfeoffed Justice to policies tempered by the times, rather than to those exalted and more admirable zealots who would strike no league with error, nor temporize with ignoble aims that they might embody somewhat their dreams of civil and religious liberty.

The lamp within the visionary's cell is a star indeed, but it twinkles in a constellation of which the multitude knows nothing. The most of men, and the politician is interested in majorities, have little time or understanding for social castle-builders. "The bookish theoric" soon exhausts their patience. They are not seeking deliverance from Egyptian bondage so much as entrance into a land flowing with milk and honey. They grow impatient of the Wilderness that lies between the domains of slavery and freedom. Present hunger makes them lament the fleshpots of their masters. The golden calf is set up again, and such is the popular perversity at times that the Moses of Freedom's chosen people is permitted only to contemplate her fruitful realm from the heights of some adjacent Nebo. Modern partizans are not unlike the ancient Jews. And when the reformer recalls the fact that Jehovah himself could scarcely divorce the latter from their idols, it should somewhat cool his ardor as an image-breaker among the former. The crowd still demands something which its pride and prejudice may catch and emulate; for heaven itself were unattractive to some, unless the melody of golden harps and choiring cherubim would now and then give way for a discourse on pensions or the "robber tariff." And the statesman who neglects such things as bon fires, parades and such poetic commonplace as "Your altars and your sires," "God and your native land" will scarcely "live, good easy man, to see his honors blushing thick upon him."

II

The Romans understood the crowd and tyrannized it thoroughly. *Panem et circenses*—bread and

games! Marc Antony knew its disposition; and he reminded it, not so much of Ceasar's wounds as of Ceasar's will!

Wherein hath Ceasar thus deserved your loves?

Alas! you know not. I must tell you then;

To every Roman citizen he gives;

To every several man, seventy five drachmas.

Brutus would have given freedom; and for his pains was chased from Rome to meet a self-inflicted death at Phillippi. The "noblest Roman of them all" is a type of many modern reformers who get the applause but not the vote of the great American citizen. They mistake the clamors of discontent for the cries for reform. They look upon every labor organization as a Jacobin club, seemingly forgetful of the fact that its chief business is the creation of a relief fund for the impecunious, sick and dead of the brotherhood; an annual parade, a studious avoidance of politics and the inauguration of a strike when starvation is the only alternative. It is forgotten that a dog fight will blockade the street, and the mere announcement of a prize-fight exclude every thing else from the daily press, divide a state into warring factions and at last cause the legislature to be convened in extra session! Fame and fortune attend the pugilist while the poet starves in obscurity. Brawn plays to crowded houses while Brain greets empty benches. The reformer is too frequently unmindful of the truth of such trite observations. He seems indifferent to the fact that men are most easily taught the right or wrong through object lessons. They want something to bow to, some image to reverence, some *Idol* to worship. Costumes stiffened with embroideries of gold, the flowing plume and glittering epaulette; the jewelled insignia of splen-

did courts, graced by beauty and adorned with minstrelsy and music; gay processions led by clarion notes and waving miles of silken gonfalons—the lists of war, the knightly tournament and every badge and sign of chivalric display—diamond crowns, swinging gardens and luxurious retreats—and at last sarcophagi of gold and marble! 'Tis thus Plutocracy may lead millions of ragged starvelings fettered with the gilded chains of greed in triumphs more imperial than those of Rome herself! The philosopher may condemn the things of royal pride and civic glory, but as long as its wages are "uncut," the multitude will not only excuse, but will boast of the vanity of its tyrants, and like beggars at a feast will welcome the crumbs of extravagant display, feeling honored to be assembled at such a brilliant scene.

The reformer should take his cue from the plutocrat.

Human nature can be led to directly opposite ends without a change of means.

The Cross and Crescent came into conflict from the same motives, and in pursuit of the same objects; the hope of paradise, and temporal supremacy. Houris made the Musulman disaster-fearless; saints inspired the Christian with the martyr's fortitude. The Civil war was fought by both parties upon constitutional grounds—by one to save the Union; by the other, to hold the Slave. Tyrants have been removed with daggers; Pisistratus used them on himself to become a tyrant. The difference between the demagogue and statesman is in practice and not in precept. The politicians of the South have led her people repeatedly through disaster and disgrace by keeping constantly before their minds the *pensioned* federal soldier! In the North the bugbear has been the

demagogic fear of the Confederacy getting into the saddle again! Texas has politicians who have "campaigned" on a "Confederate record," and subsequently justified the invasion of a *Sovereign State* by federal troops to suppress a strike. It seems indeed that the man who anathematized John Brown, would canonize John Altgeld! But still he is not wholly inconsistent. Thirty five years ago he was actuated by an idolatrous devotion to a name; he defended an ancient institution—Slavery—simply because it was ancient; his battle cry was *the sacred rights of property!* Time has not changed his motives. Another ancient institution—Property—is being attacked today. He bows to the same idol that has a missing feature, here and there, perhaps, broken from it by the iconoclasts of the past, but its votary is none the less devout.

And man will continue to worship the great and old. His own life but a fleeting moment within the immensity of time, and dwelling upon a globe with countless others sown interminably deep within the fields of space, every object that suggests the Infinite enthralis the imagination and makes the will a slave. On earth the mountain, cataraet and ocean move him to reverent meditation; in space, the unending flight of planets, stars and suns. Every majestic object of the universe has been worshipped as a god. And "in the starry shade of dim an solitary loveliness" Art was born. Then came the dream of immortality, and every hope through which man has sought to soften down the desolation of the grave. In the contemplation of Nature man realized his imperfection, and as soon as architecture and sculpture taught him to embody his ideas, his creations

found a prototype within the objects of his idolatry, and the ideal excellencies with which he clothed the beings who he supposed presided over the universe.

Many centuries have flown since men became the makers of temples and statuary; but posterity has not outgrown the superstitious predilections of the most primeval ancestry. Cathedrals and palaces, imposing monuments and every extravagance of architecture awaken national pride, and become the means of national development or degradation according to the character of the statesmanship by which they are promoted. The stately piles of Greece, the Acropolis and Pantheon charm the stranger to their classic clime. Ancient splendors covered by the shifting sands of a score of centuries make us forget the inhumanities with which they were contemporary. The crumbling Coliseum wherein the fashion, wealth and tyranny of Rome amused itself with gladiatorial exhibitions is something more than the relic of civic butchery. In the presence of that colossal fragment of antiquity, we recall the poet's lines:

The gladiator's bloody circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection,
While Cæsar's chambers and the

Augustan halls

Grovel on earth in indistinct decay:
And thou didst shine, thou rolling
moon upon

All this, and cast a wide and tender
light

Which softened down the hoar austerity

Of rugged desolation, and filled up,
As 'twere anew, the gaps of centuries,
Leaving that beautiful which still

was so,
And making that which was not till
the place

Became *Religion*, and the heart ran
o'er

With silent worship of the great and
old!

III

The *Ancient* has always received the especial sanction of mankind. Immemorial custom gives the Law its prestige; and Religion has been chiefly propagated by the fact, that *all* men at *all* times have worshipped something. The savage and the civilized tread religiously in the footsteps of their "daddies." Philosophy has often plucked the heart of savage superstition from the body of our most cherished institutions. But, still, the village church bell, that has for so many generations pealed the golden chimes of joy, and tolled the solemn monotones of grief, calls its wonted multitudes to prayer.

Think of a people that places itself in the foremost rank of progress, and builds its civil and religious institutions out of the fragments of barbaric codes and customs which have escaped the ruin of time. Contemplate the navies of the world; put afloat for the most part by nations that profess to love their neighbors as themselves. Recall the fact that chattel slavery is scarcely cold within its grave—hear the march of soldiery to murder striking labor—think of the womanhood sacrificed to lust—hear the cries of famished babes, whose voices should be melodies of love and peace and joy—look upon the agony of toiling manhood, fighting greed for bread—behold the bleeding hearts of millions, crushed within them by the tyranny of wealth, the Moloch whom all worship—see the many homes in which famine has hushed with woe and want the happy voices that make of home an image of the paradise of which we dream! Why are men, women and children thus crucified when they are able to resist their executioners? It is be-

cause custom has made them cowards. The *Ancient* binds them to an Ixion wheel; chains them to the Caucasus of greed, to be fed upon by the vulture of Capital.

The *Ancient* is indeed an enchanting spirit which centuries of civilization shall fail to exorcise. For regarding immortality as the greatest good, the individual cannot but bend the knee to that which speaks to him of a consummate boon. The ideal of ideals is life forever. And where the mould and ivy reign through ages of undisputed usurpation, it is the genius of the place, and every fragment of each fallen column arch and colonnade is a thrice-hallowed shrine at which some pilgrim worships. Antiquity is a temple, vast as the sky's illimitable expanse, and every thing within its immemorial precincts receives the homage of mankind.

Tradition has an oracle in every land, and prejudice is its interpreter. Innovation is a missionary, carrying the gospels of Doubt. Investigation, Logic and Science, evangelizing in the name of Truth. Occasionally it has a cult; but on the whole, the canons of its discipline are framed in the spirit of such austerity that the majority of men have scarcely the courage to contemplate, let alone embrace them. For the presence of Truth is a kind of "Beatific Vision," capable of enjoyment by its elect alone. To the crowd it must come veiled Mokana-like. It can take no part in the affairs of men unless tricked out in the fantastic garb of custom. And thus has progress always been the masquerade of Truth, upon whose assumed eccentric antics the populace attended, believing it but swelled an itinerary of its own foolish predilections, and was thereby led to its own salvation. In the underestimation of this fact the reformer will meet defeat. The rep-

representative of a class, respectable as select, he has undertaken the regeneration of the body politic. His schemes for the improvement of society have all the encouragement of historic truth and philosophic demonstration. The entire field of exact and speculative knowledge has been laid under contribution for the verification of his doctrines. His ideas find expression in radical social theories that appeal to the public with the persuasive graces of eloquence, rhetoric and sound reasoning. Occasionally a theory is crystallized into a "colony"—a working model for a greater social structure. Bellamy has seen several formed to the honor of his name. Proudhon, he who would die a warrior, if he could not live a laborer, has a following in the United States—disciples of the greatest sociologist of modern times, who have sealed conviction with their blood. Industrialism, Co-operatism and Anarchy have found devotion in the flower of American manhood. And yet monuments in Waldheim cemeteries will continue indefinitely to mark the height of their achievements. Not because their tenets lack the cohesive force of logical and historic demonstration. Aristotle himself could not find a syllogistic flaw in the major and minor from which Proudhon drew the conclusion that *Property is robbery*. The learning of Gibbon were unequal to the least disparagement of Bellamy's arraignment of the present social system.

Neither could the Athenians silence the impiety of Socrates with reason—they found a successful substitute in poison! The religion of his countrymen has disappeared from amongst the affairs of men. It did not meet its fate, however, at the hands of science. It was absorbed by a subsequent superstition, and lost its prestige and iden-

tity upon becoming the basis of Catholicism. Its disintegration came about almost imperceptibly, and through the process by which Christianity engrafted itself upon the prejudices of men for its own advancement.

Christianity flourished in obedience to the principles through the operation of which she usurped the throne of her predecessor, Polytheism. Adhering strictly to the rigid Essenism of its founder, the cardinal virtues of which were nonresistance and the contempt of property, it would have shared the fate of the many heresies to which it has given occasion. But the Christian religion appealed to the sentiment, rather than to judgment of men. "It was before deity embodied in a human form, walking among men partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping o'er their graves, slumbering in the manger, bleeding on the cross, that the prejudices of the Synagogue, the doubts of the Academy, the pride of the Portico, the tascos of the Lictors and the swords of the thirty legions were humbled in the dust."

And in our own times Christianity owes less to the subtleties of trinitarian orthodoxy, than to the emotionalism of the camp-meeting revival; less to patristic learning, than to parepatic eloquence. The tortures of the damned and the joys of the elect, showers of brimstone and molten lead, and rivers of milk and honey are the *solid* foundation upon which it has built the structure of enduring dominion.

The growth and permanency of religious systems conform to the invariable principles that assure the successful organization of every system which seeks greatness and dominion in the numbers it draws to its standard. In the hands of those who lead, logic and learning

do not rank as means of the first importance; since logic and learning did not win their spurs in fields where human interests were most concerned. History chronicles no war, not even a fisticuff as to the distance of the stars. Geologists may read different stories from the records of the rocks, but we have yet to hear of the settlement of their contentions according to the London prize ring. Humbolt and Muller would never come to blows. Theories, geocentric and heliocentric; whether the oak is endogenous or exogenous; whether music is cosmic or sentimental; whether Homer was born at Chios, or Shakespeare wrote Hamlet; whether electricity is static or dynamic, or both: such questions will never cause the bombardment of a Fort Sumpter, nor the surrender of an Appomattox. They may be determined by the simplest rules of evidence. No human interests are vitally concerned.

But whether this is a piece of the true cross; whether Kansas should be slave or free; whether Cuba should be recognized; whether the Monroe doctrine is a fact or a fancy; the United States should adopt a standard of gold or silver, or both: such questions are not to be disposed of so readily. Logic and learning, though as easy of application to these as to other questions, are with the savants and asses sent to the rear. Philosophers give way to partisans; the sword displaces the syllogism. The fanaticism of the crowd, like that of the "devout worshipper of genius, is proof against all evidence and all argument. The character of its *Idol* is a matter of faith; and the province of faith is not to be invaded by reason. The most decisive proofs are rejected; the plainest rules of morality are explained away; extensive and important portions of

history are completely distorted."

The reformer must then, like Valentine when taken by the outlaws, content himself to be its general;—

To make a virtue of necessity— that he may wield it to his purposes. The unyielding determination of those choice spirits who bring the zeal of martyrdom to the promotion of truth is as unavailing as admirable. They are not unlike those ancient philosophers of whom Macauley said: "They promised what was impracticable; they despised what was practicable; they filled the world with long words and long beards; and they left it as wicked and as ignorant as they found it." The masses—whose condition they would make better; upon whose lives they would let fall in unabating glory, the light of Justice—persist in speaking of them with the epithets of visionary and fanatic; and they have yet to extend beyond the numbers of a most respectable minority the attempted realization of the least utopian of their dreams.

IV

And yet I would not exile the mind forever from the confines of Utopia. I would place no flaming sword at the entrance to its delightful scenes. It were well if those who labor amongst the thorns and stubble of the political field would ever and anon direct the eye to the rippling streams, fruitful groves and soft retreats of an ideal realm. The *Idyls* of Theocritus, the Eclogues of Virgil, the Atlantis of Plato and the Utopia of More are worthy the studious attention of every one who aspires to make the world better for his having lived in it. But in the pursuit of the ideal, the real is not to be altogether neglected; and in the Minerva of

Phidias, the Tub of Diogenes, the Iliad of Homer and the Prince of Macchiavel the reformer may learn lessons of invaluable service in the promotion of his plans.

The Dreamer has done an immense work in the civilization of men. He has been the power behind the throne. He leads the leaders of the people. He is the play-wright; the politicians are the actors, and he stands in the same relation to them as Shakspeare to Booth and Barret. The people are the *gallery gods* who hiss the villain and applaud the hero to an echo! The dramatist cannot act his plays, nor can the dreamer realize his visions. McCulloch could not have written *Julius Cæsar*, any more than Washington, *The Rights of Man*. There have been thousands of actors since 1564; there has been but one *Hamlet*. The poet generalizes, the actor particularizes. The unities, machinery and cryptograms(?) are as unnecessary to the one, as the make-ups, costumes and properties are useless to the other. The dreamer conceives, the politician executes. In the solitude of the closet, with none to jeer and none to praise, the one may give himself up wholly to the contemplation of the truth; amidst the huzzas of the hustings, with passion eager to applaud and prejudice ready to assail, the other must, like the Parthian soldier, fight the false while seemingly in flight before it. He must impart to his words the stealthy caution of conspirators. And the visionary is devoid of caution. With truth upon his lips, and infinite kindness in heart he tells the suffering sons of men, *love ye one another*; and at last from out the same heart, racked to the extremest agony, there comes, *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!*

Power and Policy are the complement and supplement of the angle formed by the meeting of the lines of Truth and Humanity. Not power in the sense of sheer force, for such power is useless except for the purposes of mere destruction. It is a Pretorian guard that knocks an empire down to the highest bidder. It is like the electric current that runs riot through the atmosphere, blasting every thing with which it comes in contact. And continuing the simile, I mean power as exemplified in the electrical mechanics that may move the commerce of the world. The genius of the politician alone may attain it. It is he who may harness the multitude to the car of progress, or to the Juggernaut of its own destruction. Without it the idealities of the dreamer are mere pictures; as beautiful as those of Raphael; to the connoisseur a miracle of art, to the the crowd less interesting than a daub.

The power of which I speak is many-phased. To achieve it is ultimate of human motive. The means of its achievement is ever consonant to race ideals. When man first arose from a solitary to a social life, bodily strength and natural prowess satisfied his vanity. Hercules was the impersonation of a race ideal. Mankind progressed. Its ideal changed. To worship form and strength was to match the intelligence of man with the instinct of the beast. Muscle lost its votaries, the savage passed; the necromancer rose, the knee was bent to power still, but clubs and arrows were fashioned into idols. The repeaters of insane mummeries were the receptacles of power. Fetishism passed. Sticks and stones were substituted by the golden calf. High priests wore the ermine. Obedience to the anointed of the Lord was the "delegated

In the mathematics of civilization

voice of God." Violence fell into further disrepute. But the weak were none the less ruthlessly plundered by a subtler force—rapine refined—the mastery of their hopes and fears. The peace and joys of earth were bartered for elysian dreams. Levites and Incas enjoyed the fullness of the earth. Religion became the subterfuge of greed.

Civilization broadened. Theocracy was relegated to the refuse of the race. Egypt and Judea passed away. Athens and Rome arose. Springing from a common stock, and co-operating as brothers, the founders of the ancient democracies enjoyed prosperity and freedom. The body politic grew in health and strength, that to be a Roman was greater than a king. The Tarquins were expelled; and the avenues to individual ascendancy seemed forever closed.

Men learned the lust of conquest. The martial and the honorable joined hands. The streets and house tops were thronged to see the conquering hero come! The champions of their country received the plaudits of a nation. Adulation and luxury were promised to the votaries of war. The heroes of battle were banqueted and triumphed. Columns and arches were built to their glory. Deceased and even living, they were exalted to the dignity of godship. The control of a great and growing empire necessitated a standing army. It became the tool of power. Pretorian guards cast their fortunes with leaders most generous of donatives. Republics contracted into monarchies, monarchies into despotisms. It was thus the deified Augustus changed the mild government of the Scipios into the fearful tyranny of Tiberius and Caligula. Occasionally there was an attempted re-

turn to former simplicity; but the "greediness which riches introduced for gain" was far too great for the philosophy of Aurelius, or the virtues of the Antonines, to stay the empire against disintegration.

Out of the ruins of Rome was reared the fabric of modern civilization. "The most civilized nations of modern Europe issued from the woods of Germany." The Roman character and nation had sunk to the greatest degradation. "Under the influence of governments at once dependent and tyrannical, which purchased, by cringing to their enemies, the power of trampling on their subjects, the Romans sunk into the lowest state of effeminacy and debasement. Falsehood, cowardice, sloth, conscious and unrepining degradation, formed the national character." That character was created by the power of tyranny—through centuries of *sheer force*—it was destroyed by a similar power. But besides the characteristics of relentless barbarity, the followers of such grim-visaged chieftains as Odoacer and Attila possessed others which "could not exist among the sluggish and heartless slaves who cringed around the thrones of Honorius and Augustulus. The warriors of the north, brought with them, from their forests and marshes, those qualities without which humanity is a weakness and knowledge a curse,—energy—independence—the dread of shame—the contempt of danger. It would be most interesting to examine the manner in which the admixture of the savage conqueror and the effeminate slaves, after many generations of darkness and agitation, produced the modern European character;—to trace back from the first conflict to the final amalgamation, the operation of that mysterious alchemy.

which, from hostile and worthless elements, has extracted the pure gold of human nature—to analyze the mass, and to determine the proportion in which the ingredients are mingled.”

V

In that mysterious alchemy there was nothing intellectual. The genius of the Roman law and the renaissance of belles-lettres were not the crucible in which the magical metamorphosis took place. The ancient classics have not done as much for liberty as is generally said. For it is strange that classic literature and art should have been able to restore the shattered structures of civil liberty to the beauty of their original proportions, while they were powerless to prevent them from falling to decay in the beginning. It is a peculiar drug that will revive the dead, but not prevent the sick from dying. The virtues of Aladdin's lamp were absurdly inconsistent, if it could construct a palace in a night, and yet could not repair a barn within the same amount of time. In the time of Livy, the literature and art of Greece had not suffered the ravages of time and barbarian armies. The Alexandrian library was not burnt, and the Parthenon was not yet desecrated. Roman students went to Athens to complete their education. Augustus himself was scarcely returned from the Athenian schools when he succeeded to the fortunes of his uncle, Julius Cæsar. Literature was most assiduously cultivated, and Roman genius reached its zenith under the worst of Roman emperors. Nero was contemporary with Seneca and Epictetus. And if liberty owed so little to art and letters while they still swayed the human mind with the undi-

vided power of their pristine glory, how much less was liberty their debtor at a time when the sceptre was long-relinquished, and their former domain an ever-widening solitude? On the contrary, they retarded rather than advanced civilization; for if we may believe the author of the Commentaries, the little learning which then existed was monopolized by the monkish clergy. The law of the church was modeled upon the civil law; and the prelates embraced with the utmost ardor a method of judicial proceedings which banished the intervention of a jury (that bulwark of *Gothic* liberty) and placed the arbitrary power of decision in the breast of a single man. (Black. bk. 3, par. 99.)

Society was not regenerated by the geni of Wisdom. Learning to it was not as a Richelieu to France. It was through feudalism, born of piracy; superstition born of fear; chivalry born of lust: and thro' all three, that were born of Egoism, that the prophecy which said—

While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;

And when Rome falls—the World.—

was not fulfilled. The oath the warrior took, upon doing homage to his liege lord; the prayer he breathed to the god of battle; the vow he made to his lady love—such were the things that made Attila the scourge of God, Richard the Lion-hearted and Godfrey invincible.

“In their baronial feuds and single fields

What deeds of prowess unrecorded died!

And love, which lent a blazon to their shields,

With emblems well devised by amorous pride,

Thro' all the mail of iron hearts would glide”

It was the songs of the Troubadors, rather than the stately hexameters of Homer and Virgil; the glories of the Tournament, rather than the sophisms of the Stoic; the fanaticism of the Crusader, rather than the learning of the Civilian, that made it possible for humanity to emerge anew from ten centuries of crime and blood.

The saviors of society are loyal, rather than learned; and are governed by prejudice, rather than guided by philosophy. Henry in the house of Burgesses, the mob at Boston Harbor and Lincoln at the field of Gettysburg are the dramatic scenes that stir our natures to most perilous enterprises, or move them to a flood of tears. The multitudes which such scenes and men command are perfectly akin to the Royalists of a few centuries ago, of whom a great historian has said: "Our royalist countrymen were not heartless, dangling courtiers, bowing at every step, and simpering at every word. They were not mere machines for destruction, dressed up in uniforms, caned into skill, intoxicated into valor, defending with out love, destroying without hatred. There was freedom in their subserviency, a nobleness in their very degradation. The *sensitiment* of individual independence was strong within them. Compassion and romantic honor, the prejudices of childhood, and the venerable names of history threw over them a spell potent as that of Duessa; and, like the Red Cross Knight, they thought they were doing battle for an injured beauty, while they defended a false and loathsome sorceress. In truth *they scarcely entered into the merits of the political question*. It was not for a treacherous king or an intolerant church that they fought, but for the *old* banner which had waved in *so many* battles over the

heads of their *fathers*, and the *altars* at which they had received the hands of their brides."

Would the North have thronged the lists of war as eagerly as she did throng them; would the South have changed her fertile valleys into burial places; would the conflict which begun at Harper's Ferry and ended at Appomatox have ever disgraced the chronicles of men, had those who bore the brunt of war, to be torn by shot and shell, and afterwards to expose their scars as mendicants for bread, known the motives by which that gigantic spectacle of civil butchery was staged?

Old Glory was the emblem of devotion on the one side, the Stars and Bars were objects of reverence on the other. The multitude on either side who had nothing to gain and their lives to lose, marched to battle to the martial strains of Dixie and Rally Round the Flag, Boys! Those who were wiser, and not to be humbugged by bombast and music, passed twenty-nigger exemption laws, hired substitutes and remained at home. Then as now men went to war out of prejudice and pride, and as the result of an appeal to force human liberty remained stationary. For war has done nothing for freedom. It did nothing for it in 1066, nothing in 1776, nothing in 1815, nothing in 1863. William fought for a crown. Washington for representation, Wellington for England and Grant to save the Union. Had Harold won Hastings, the condition of the masses could have been no worse than that of the followers of Jack Cade and "the mad preacher of Kent." Had Washintgon lost, an English vice-roy could have done no worse than send an army to put down a strike, and commit its leaders for contempt. Had Lee succeeded, the Negro would know today

where he would dine tomorrow, and while through his success chattel slavery might have at last embraced the *poor white trash*, it could not have entailed more misery and degradation upon the races than has industrial servitude, its successor.

In the triumph of tyranny justice may find the means of its own promotion. In the present controversy between the United States and England concerning Venezuela many valuable hints may be found. Patriotism is the talismanic word with which all conjure. On the *merits of the political question*, scarcely a regiment could be raised. It is not the boundary line between British Guiana and Venezuela, for thousands, who would go to war, do not know the countries are contiguous; nor is it the Monroe doctrine that stirs their valor, for there are daily papers that do not understand its scope; and as to Americans fighting for freedom's sake, the idea is too keenly humorous for serious consideration. It is by representing England as a *robber nation* that the American people may be urged to play Ulysses to her Polypheme. The shades of Washington and Jackson, and those of the hosts who fell the *martryed heroes of liberty* at Lexington and New Orleans, are evoked in the enslaving awe of the witch scenes in Macbeth. *Flag, country, national honor and integrity* are the magic words by which America may be arrayed against British arms, or enslaved by British gold. A real war with England is not a probability of the present time, since she could as well afford to bombard Liverpool as New York, but the reformer may find in the diplomacy of the present administration the means of practical procedure in the rehabilitation of republican institutions.

VI

Political doctors, who have volunteered their services to our sick Republic, our ultra-reformers, are prescribing for a patient that throws away their physic. The least among them that sees that the diathesis of the sufferer is usurious—the more than Job-like sores of monopoly in all of its phases unmistakably indicate that the life-current is poisoned with greed. Diagnosing thus correctly, the election of remedial agencies follows easily. It requires no lengthy consultation to agree upon a course of medicine more powerful even than that prescribed in the Omaha platform.

Land, transportation and finance! Use and occupancy, the only title of possession; nationalization of the railways and manufacturies; and the demonetization of the precious metals, which are to be substituted by a system of fiat currency, “safe, sound and flexible!” Well may the assembled medico-political doctors exclaim *Eureka!* Yes, well they might, were not the administration of their proposed remedies contra-indicated by such minor national distempers as individual pride, arrogance and folly.

There are thousands of petty landlords in the populist party who would abandon it at the first intimation of the insecurity of their paltry acres. Admirably they stand against alien and syndicate ownership of “our native soil,” for they may be swallowed up by them. Again there are thousands of populists existing upon the “unearned increment” of either *profit, interest or rent*, (the trinity of evils that have at first afflicted and at last destroyed the social structures of every age) who would join the opposition instantaneously upon the earliest suggestion that either of

them should be condemned. They favor fiatism, according to the theory that to increase the volume of money is to increase prices, and consequently to swell their revenue.

As to the government ownership of railways, the institution of property is yet too much of a Holy of holies in the estimation of the masses for its accomplishment by the ballot. The fundamental right of property is adverse possession at will against the world. It is a veritable rock of ages—the foundation of our laws and customs; remove it, and the superstructure falls. The right of eminent domain, alone, is superior to the right of property; and eminent domain is nothing more or less than confiscation with indemnity. It is co-existent with property itself. When the State undertakes to convey the property of A to B and others for the public good, it is policy for A to submit. Otherwise, he may make himself odious to the community as opposed to its welfare. But when the State subsequently undertakes to reconvey the same property from B to itself and for the same purpose—the public good—the process involves a contradiction, not in truth, but in the minds of both A and B, that prevents its *immediate* peaceable accomplishment. A is no longer silenced by policy, and he joins B in a demagogic uproar of centralization and paternalism. The demagogue has a most favorable vantage ground in the damnable abuses of federal patronage during recent administrations; and the effect upon the crowd of the specious arguments, afforded him by such national frauds as the Credit Mobilier, Sugar trust investigations, Van Alen ambassadorships and income tax decisions, would be much like that of the stage produc-

tion of one of Haggard's weird romances. The abuses which he would predict as attendant upon the nationalization of railways and kindred industries might be as wildly improbable as the fortunes of Ayesha, but still the dramatic effect of his presentation of them, to a people that has had cause for frequent real alarm at federal usurpation, will make the delusion perfect; and the reformer would be as likely to dissipate the opposition thus aroused, as he would to quiet the emotions of an audience by reminding it that *Macbeth* was fiction.

The tears of misery must fall yet awhile upon the rock of property, which has wrecked so many ships of state sailing upon the sea of civilization. For notwithstanding it is regarded as a legal fiction by the greatest jurists, still Property would add nothing to the exclusiveness with which it possesses the human mind, were it the most absolute of facts. "There is nothing," says Blackstone, bk. 2, chap. 1, "which so generally strikes the *imagination*, and engages the *affections* of mankind, as the right of property; or that sole and *despotic* dominion which one man claims and exercises over the external things of the world, in total exclusion of any other individual in the universe. And yet there are very few that will give themselves the trouble to consider the original and foundation of this *right*. Pleased as we are with the possession, we seem afraid to look back to the means by which it was acquired, as if fearful of some defect in our title; or at best we rest satisfied with the decision of the laws in our favor, without examining the reason or authority upon which those laws have been built. We think it enough if our title is derived by the grant of the former proprietor, by descent from our ancestors, or by the

last will and testament of the dying owner; not caring to reflect that, *accurately and strictly speaking, there is no foundation in nature, or in natural law, why a set of words upon parchment should convey the dominion of land; or why the occupier of a particular field or (the possessor) of a jewel, when lying on his death bed, and no longer able to maintain possession, should be entitled to tell the rest of the world which of them should enjoy it after him.*" (These are not the words of a Hay market rioter, but of Chief Justice Blackstone.)

And men love dominion still too well to divest themselves even partially of the power through which they may oppress their fellows.

In the ultimate analysis, therefore, of existing social conditions, there is no opportunity for general and organic reform. It is a *step*, and not a *leap* that should be made. And if any reform is achieved at all, it will be through the adoption of such issue or issues which, although within themselves incapable of any thing more than an imperfect restoration of our dilapidated institutions, will serve to mobilize the scattered hosts of poverty into an aggressive solidarity. Such an issue is presented in the Free Coinage of Silver, at the *time-honored* ratio of Sixteen to One. By this I do not mean to say that financial legislation will prove a second son of York and "make glorious summer of this the winter of our discontent! With silver dollars as thick as summer leaves, and Penury within a million homes might petition Plenty unavailingly. To use a metaphor, I may illustrate my meaning by saying that the free coinage of silver is a sun glass by which the rays of discontent, dissipated, as they are, throughout the political atmosphere, may be concentrated upon a given object—

Plutocracy. If the Omaha platform be likened to a wedge, *silver* is certainly its point of contact with the object to be rent asunder.

VII

It is foolish to expect a party triumph through the unaided force of correct principles and sound reasoning. The votaries of truth are much like those of christianity. The churches are thronged with worshippers, and their daily lives are constantly giving the lie to their pretended piety. They worship Christ Sunday, but are as loth to turn the other cheek on Monday as the most ungodly of their neighbors; and if we are to judge from the gold-grabbing tendencies of christian nations, the eye of the scriptural needle must be as large as the entrance to the Mammoth Cave.

All men are the professed lovers of justice, yet behold the universal corruption of courts and legislatures. The most consummate scoundrel wears the livery of the honest man. The plutocrat has equality on his lips and slavery in his heart; and as the villian calls him brother, whom he would stab, the plutocrat addresses those as freemen, whom he would enslave. Dishonesty is ever an aspiring Gloster to the throne of goodness.

Alas why should you heap these cares on me?

*I am unfit for state and majesty;
I do beseech you take it not amiss;
I cannot nor I will not yield to you.*

To be right, therefore, is but one of the preliminary steps to success. It is not the all-important step; for, were it so, the Hunchback would have gone uncrowned, and the Chicago platform would not have been written. If truth were the lode star of human effort no slave-ship would have landed at Plymouth, nor would

Shylock rule the world. Milton would not have died in poverty, the memory of Paine would not have been aspersed and the gospel of Christ would have long since embraced the world. Through the force of truth, Nero, Maximin and Caracalla; Charles V., the Borgias and Catherine de Medici, and Sherman, Carlisle and Cleveland would not have been elevated from the sphere of private life.

The history of civilization is filled with the failure of politics of the purest beneficence for the advancement of mankind. And as in the life of every individual, there is a graveyard called the past, in which are buried ennobling hopes and generous endeavors—children beloved and mourned of the heart and brain—so is there in the career of every civil system a burial ground wherein liberty, another Niobe, doth mourn her many children prematurely fallen.

It is not enough, therefore, that the principles upon which it is proposed to build a better social system be grounded upon *Liberty, Fraternity and Equality*. For with nothing more than the immaterial force of philosophic truth to carry conviction to the minds of men, you shall have occasion to congratulate yourself for being right, oftener than president. "Every political sect *must have* its esoteric and its exoteric school, its abstract doctrines for the initiated, its visible symbols, its imposing forms, its mythological fables for the vulgar. It assists the devotion of those who are unable to raise themselves to the contemplation of pure truth by all the devices of Pagan and Papal superstition. It has its altars and its deified heroes, its relics and pilgrimages, its canonized martyrs and confessors, its festivals and legendary miracles. * * * It may be added that, as in religion, so in pol-

itics, few even of those who are enlightened enough to comprehend the meaning latent under the emblems of their faith can resist the contagion of the popular superstition. Often, when they flatter themselves that they are merely feigning a compliance with the prejudices of the vulgar, they are themselves under the influence of those very prejudices. It probably was not altogether on grounds of expediency that Socrates taught his followers to honor the gods whom the State honored, and bequeathed a cock to Esculapius with his dying breath. So there is often a portion of willing credulity and enthusiasm in the veneration which the most discerning men pay to their political *idols*. * * * Logicians may reason about abstractions, but the masses of men must have images. The philosopher may admire a noble conception, but the crowd turns away in disgust from words which present no image to their minds. Doctrines must be embodied before they excite a strong public feeling."

And with what success could you embody the doctrines of free land, government ownership of railways and the demonetization of the precious metals? What prejudices can be enlisted to their support? Perhaps you say such motives are unworthy a great political party. Yours is, then, a fragile craft upon the current of the world's events. You have not "in imagination heard the shout that shook the Coliseum's roofless walls," have not heard the cry of Allah il Allah at the sound of which the Crescent was borne into the jaws of death, not felt the shock of riot and confusion promoted by nothing more than a dudge of green or blue.

In every department of life we are forever subject to a mysterious influence which we designate variously as love, honor, loyalty and

pride; but which is merely the unconscious reverence we pay to that which time hath consecrated. A beggar will defend his country against the aspersions of a foreigner. And even though the granaries of his native land burst with plenty, and his children starve; while on himself she may have unjustly placed the stigma of disgrace. And why? Does philosophy inspire his anger? No, his anger is the voice of Egoism, born of racial and national pride, cultivated thro' out the ages. The beggar is a type of millions of our citizens.

There are maimed and indigent soldiers in the South today, who never had a slave and have yet to learn why the civil war was waged, who take on an extasy of joy in listening to the strains of *Dixie*. And there are soldiers of the North between whom and public charity is nothing more than a niggardly pension, the reward of fighting for a country that depreciated the money of their wages to enrich those who stayed at home, whom the mention of *Old Glory* fills with an insane joy and sends the martial current thro' their veins as madly as when they sung, "We are coming father Abraham three hundred thousand strong!" Each year sees a reunion, brought about by designing politicians and "smart" business men. Patriotism is made a stalking horse for the farce comedy of demagogues who have an itch for place, and the miscellaneous mob of dollar-chasers that thrive upon the prejudices of men. And thus may thousands be drawn together to hear again recited the page of civil butchery, when scarce a score could be assembled as the champions of civil liberty! In memory of the heroes dead—hasheries and lunch counters do a thriving business!

It is useless for the reformer to

chide at such conditions. They are essentially human; and he must turn them to his own account. He must cater to the crowd, enter into its thought and language and make its purposes seemingly his own. He must enlist its sympathies thro' its prejudices, and having won it to his cause, still play upon its passions, hopes and fears. And this cannot be done thro' learned discourses on land monopoly and usury. Political science will bring on the millenium when physiology carries prohibition, or the rules of hygiene banish the cigarette-smoker. De Quincey was an opium-eater Poe a drunkard and Breckinridge a —, and we should not be surprised that Tom, Dick and Harry are democrats. Angels have been led astray by one no greater than themselves; into what interminable paths of error should we not expect the average republican to be led, under the guidance of John Sherman? Surely you do not look for the man who is so stupid as to regard Cleveland as a public benefactor, to avoid the mistakes which genius has made—nor expect the poor being who carries a torch in a "republican" parade, to rank with the angels intellectually?

Modern partizans are very much like those ancient savages who thought that the sun or moon in eclipse was being devoured by some evil monster. And as the celestial luminary was slowly overshadowed they beat the tom-tom, shrieked, howled and prayed until the monster had seemingly disgorged its prey. Worshipping the sun and moon; and ignorant of their relation to the system of which they were a part, the savage was consumed with fear whenever they departed from the even tenor of their way. And Copernicus could not have reassured him. Democrats and republicans are accustomed to a few and

well-defined objects in the political sky. Tariff, pensions and spoils are the luminaries of their idolatry. As long as they shine bright, all is well. But just as soon as some unfamiliar object gets between them and either of their *idols*, hell itself never heard such an uproar of riotous confusion as attends the incident! And, like Columbus who made the indians administer to his needs by explaining an eclipse as the Great Spirit hiding his face in anger at their mistreatment of the Spaniards, the reformer must make prevailing political superstitions serve his purposes, or perish in a wilderness of greed, the victim of worse than aboriginal atrocity.

VIII

The necessity for a single issue in the achievement of great results is the lesson of history. *Ship-money* raised Oliver Cromwell to the Protectorate of England, the *Sale of Indulgences* was the occasion of the Reformation, *Representation* was the demand of 1776, *Bread* the cry of 1789. *France* was the secret of Napoleon's success, *State sovereignty* brought on the Civil war, and in our own times we have seen the uninterrupted triumph of the democratic and republican parties, triumphs perfectly inexplicable except by the demagogic issues of the *Robber tariff* and *Pensions*.

The principal difficulties in the selection of a single issue seem to arise out of a probable capture of public offices. On the other hand there are those who think that the adoption of a single issue would smack too much of greed for spoils. To those who incline to this opinion, I would ask: Suppose the party "standing squarely upon the Omaha Platform" were elected, what considerable portion of it do you expect to see put into effective operation, antagonizing as it does

our laws, manners and institutions? "The land is the heritage of all the people." What will that declaration amount to with who votes for the Omaha platform, unless after the election, he may call for his legacy, left to him by an intestate ancestry? I know that I am entitled to as much of the earth's surface as any of my fellow men—I know that no man has a right to levy tribute of me for living upon a planet the fruits of which he enjoys freely and at my expense. But I also know that such wrongs as the landless suffer cannot be alleviated at once.

The freedom of the land, the private ownership of which is among the most vicious errors of every social system, cannot be brought in the near future. It is but thirty years since we were rid of *chattel* slavery. Justice is yet too young within the world to take such rapid strides. The crisis at present is a money crisis rather than a land crisis. What were a thousand acres of our richest soil to you, today, with the money of the country locked up in the banks of the East? A thousand dollars were a boon, indeed! The most of our citizens need dollars instead of acres. It is within the power of any party to give them the former, but as yet in the power of none to give them the latter.

It may be contended that such interpretation of the land plank is not warranted by the letter of the platform. It may be said that it is chiefly directed against alien and syndicate ownership. As for my part, I have no choice of robbers. I had as soon pay tribute for the privilege of living to a citizen of England as to a citizen of Texas—had as soon be plundered by a common highwayman, as by the demigod, Hercules. Neither am I interested in the number of those

who rob me. It is no worse than robbery whether committed by one or a thousand; and if the Goulds change their residence to escape taxation, they may do likewise to escape confiscation. The landlord is for the most part the most rapacious of the human species. The history of his depredations in every country that he has blighted with his presence has pages of cruelty more barbaric than those of Tamerlane or Genghis Khan. Persian satraps in their wildest dreams of blood are mild humanitarians compared to that petty tyrant who murders in the name of peace, and plunders in the name of law! No, the land plank means nothing; unless it means the emancipation of the tenant. In that sense it is just and philosophic, but perfectly impracticable as a political issue; as much so as the demonetization of silver would have been in 1872, or the gold standard in 1892. Yet silver was demonetized, and a hundred millions of gold-bearing bonds will soon be on the market. The moral of the story lies on the surface.

A "campaign" against property, at the present time, would be much like that of Geology against Genesis. No one who has intelligence enough to "scratch" the democratic ticket believes that the majestic universe was made in less time than it takes for the uterine development of speckled pup, or a high-tariff republican. But, if the teachings of Moses and Humboldt were left to a popular vote, with Sam Jones and all of Billingsgate as an executive committee, Moses would receive the usual "brutal democratic majority." Not because a majority believe the folk-lore of a semi-savage people, but because they are perjured by policy and custom. Some one has said that a little learning made men turn athe-

ists, but that a depth of learning restored them to religion. With a little learning you see the absurdities of religious institutions, and the hypocrisy of their supporters; and you assail them both, as if you would destroy them for the evil that they do. With a depth of learning you realize the hopelessness of successfully antagonizing an institution that has become a *maison de foi* for piety and depravity. In politics a little learning makes men anarchists and millenium-dreamers; they see the gigantic cruelty of competitive life; the unscrupulous knavery of the professed defenders of liberty; and they lead the forlorn hope of dynamiting tyranny from the homes of men. A depth of learning—knowledge of the principles of human nature, thro' which—in all ages the people have honored those who dishonored them—who have worshipped their destroyers; have canonized the most gigantic liars, and buried the greatest thieves in marble and gold!"—returns them, *apparently* at least, to the conventionalities of their times, and from the vantage ground which they afford, fight freedom's battles with success enough to dictate the terms of honorable capitulation, if not to enjoy the advantages of triumphant victory.

The world is no better than it is because its conflicts have been promoted and carried on by extreme fanaticism on the one side, and consummate knavery on the other. Mediocrity is best, says a wise man, and the liege-men of Liberty have always met defeat because they have never struck the *happy medium*. Instead of a homepath, the Reformer has been an eclectic in politics. He has too often neglected the practical for the philosophic side of statesmanship. He forgets that the successful politician must be an actor—a matchless imper-

sonator. Iago and Othello, Richard and Richmond, Miranda and Caliban, Cæsar and Cassius must be equally within his dramatic scope. He must assay the ores of intellectual mines, to separate the ignoble from the purer metals, as often as to find an alchemy with which to turn the worthless into coin as current as the gold. He must be a skilled historian, and yet the prince of novelists—a profound philosopher and a drivelling sophist. He must walk with Plato and Socrates that with Phidippides he may confound their wisdom. He must be familiar with the political economists, with the technicalities of the law that he may still retain the confidence of New York bankers and impose upon his Kentuckian constituency with the casuistry of a charlatan. He needs the mildness of Francis of Assisi and the fierceness of Ignatius Loyola—the piety of La Trappe and the irreverence of Voltaire—the garrulity of Talmage and the eloquence of Ingersoll.

The politician must be versatile to confute and confirm, and to trace to the same source the ruin or renaissance of empire. When profitable to him, in captivating color he may paint the labors of an outcast; and softening the ignorant and fanatic into the character of the rustic, show how an illiterate hermit roused Europe to crusades, and from the beneficial results of the holy wars waged for centuries by the Christian with the Saracen pay a tribute to the lowly and uncouth. Or, he may tell how the ignorance of a religious recluse inundated a world with blood—how he changed the camp of Christ into the field of Mars—how a pious maniac sent the flower of Europe's soldiery to inhospitable shores and against superior numbers, to contend for an empty grave,—depopulating and lay-

ing waste the happiest seats of the western world!

In fine the politician (that succeeds) is an epitome of human nature—the centre and circumference of the goodness and the meanness of mankind—a marvelous many-sided man—both Brutus and Cæsar, both Cataline and Curtius, both Arnold and Washington—a being of infinite contradictions, yet one and the same, Lucifer in heaven and Satan in hell!

Whether for good or evil the politician is a necessity. Without him there could have been no progress, since the numerous parties into which the people are divided have not arisen out of a love of liberty, nor out of conflicting opinions on matters of abstract political science. Mill, Adam Smith and even the great Jefferson, by whose name so many swear, are sealed books to the crowd that howls itself hoarse in mechanical applause of the gang that has done nothing during the last thirty years, except pension rich widows, give "swell" receptions, fight the War again and issue bonds! The popular vote has gone to the elevation of a popular idol, and like all idolatry the object of popular veneration has been an impotent fetish, adorned with the cap and bells of partisan malice and sectional hatred. But still the politician serves a purpose. Civilization is a succession of experiments, and since an experiment is the trial of ignorance, more often than the test of knowledge, the politician is a necessity because thro' him alone can the experiment be made. He objectifies popular folly, and instructs the people, although without intention on his part, in the school which a proverb has mentioned as alone capable of the instruction of a class that will learn in no other. Thus railway commissions will at last bring the peo-

ple to government ownership, and bond issues will teach them that a nation' like an individual, cannot get out of debt by going further into debt. No nation of modern times has demanded corrective or progressive legislation from dispassionate and philosophic motives. Malfeasance and misadministration of public affairs must be felt in all of the calamities of individual poverty and national disaster before the body politic manifests discontent. History impresses us with no fact so forcibly as that popular discontent never shows itself amongst any people, until their property is attacked or their lives are endangered. Hunger lays siege to countless homes before a great party is born. And if it fulfills its mission, it is by the creation of issues which in themselves amount to nothing.

The conditions among which political reform is to be wrought out are many and difficult. Success will not come to those who attend merely to truth—to that which out of the consideration of pure justice should take place. If it would—if men needed only to have the truth stated to them to embrace it, there were no need for political conventions and political parties. Advanced to that degree of intellectual developement the human species would be ready for the golden era of no government at all! Such an era is lost in the interminably outstretching ages of the future. We have to do with the present, and the most we can say of it is that it is alarmingly filled with suicide, insanity and crime. We are living in a time of cold-blooded calculation—an age in which greed runs riot through the veins of the body politic in streams of fire. Inevitable idleness is a crime, and men who kneel at the same shrine and profess the perfect doctrine of brotherly love will

shadow each other to the dungeon and the grave for a paltry fee. Immense wealth on one hand has made the classes drunk with tyranny, immense poverty on the other, has made the masses mad with misery. You look in vain for the splendid image of the young republic. Our cities have become the crime-centers of the land, and their moral leprosy has touched the ermine of our judiciary. We have seen the federal soldiery at the command of a tyrannical executive marshalled against the "inalienable rights of man;" and at the hands of the same power we have seen the government itself prostituted to the money brokers of the world. Such evils the people bear with patience. A few years ago the people abandoned the republican party; a few weeks ago, its policies and purposes still unchanged, they again took up its standard. By each party they are struck like curs that sends them howling to the other to be struck again; and thus they shift from party to party the fools of circumstance and the dupes of gold.

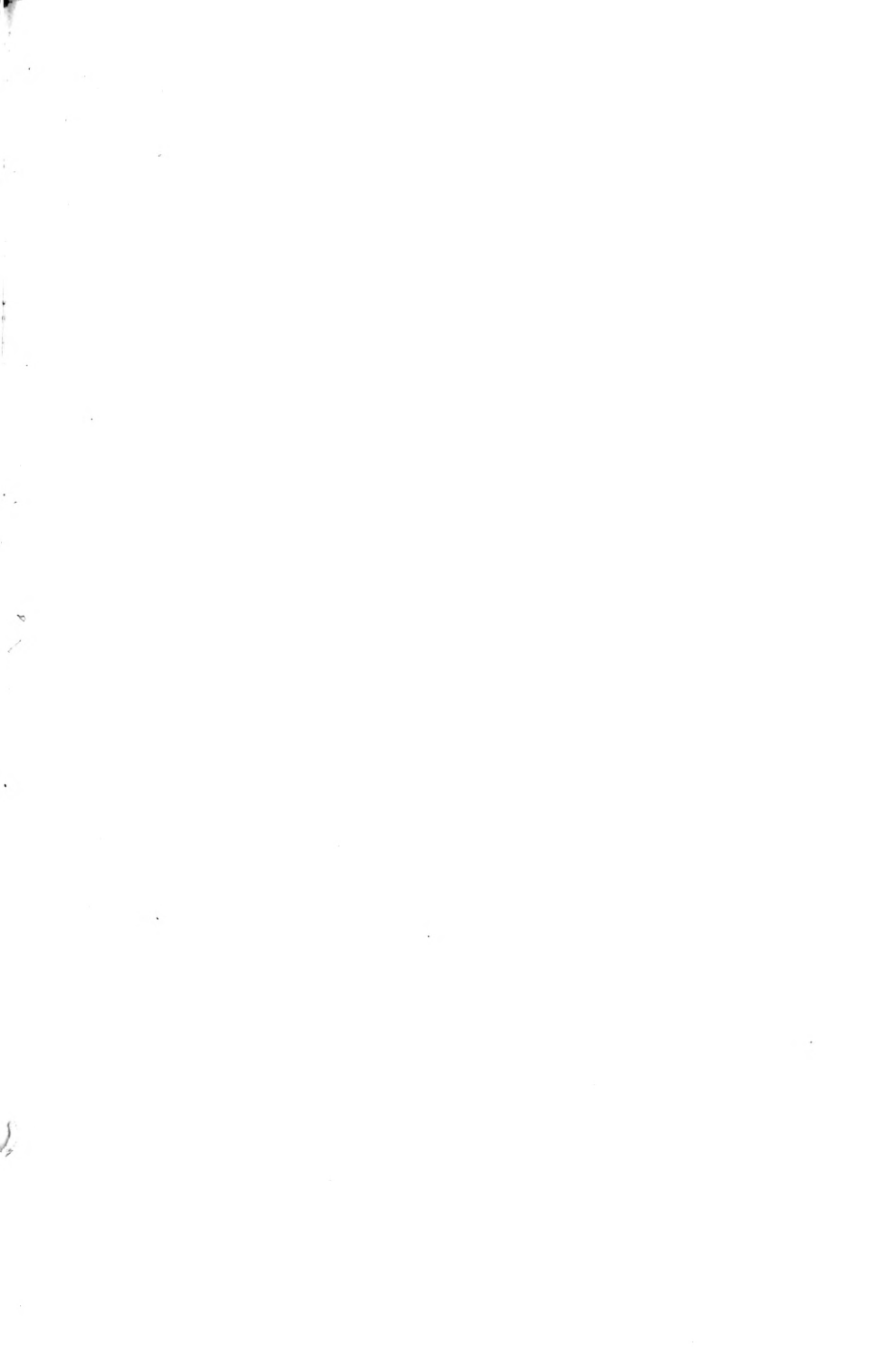
And reader, looking calmly upon the present situation, do you believe relief can come to the restless, discontented multitudes thro' the advocacy of principles, whose scope is as utopian, as they are just, harmonious and beautiful? Do you believe that the time is ripe for their realization to be attempted? Must we not out of necessity win through peace, if we win at all? And are free-land, government ownership of railways, and fiat money the vantage ground from which we are to achieve so great a victory? Do not deceive yourself with the glittering unrealities of sentimental optimism. Grapple with conditions as they are, and put away that spirit of foolhardy enterprise that had rather meat de-

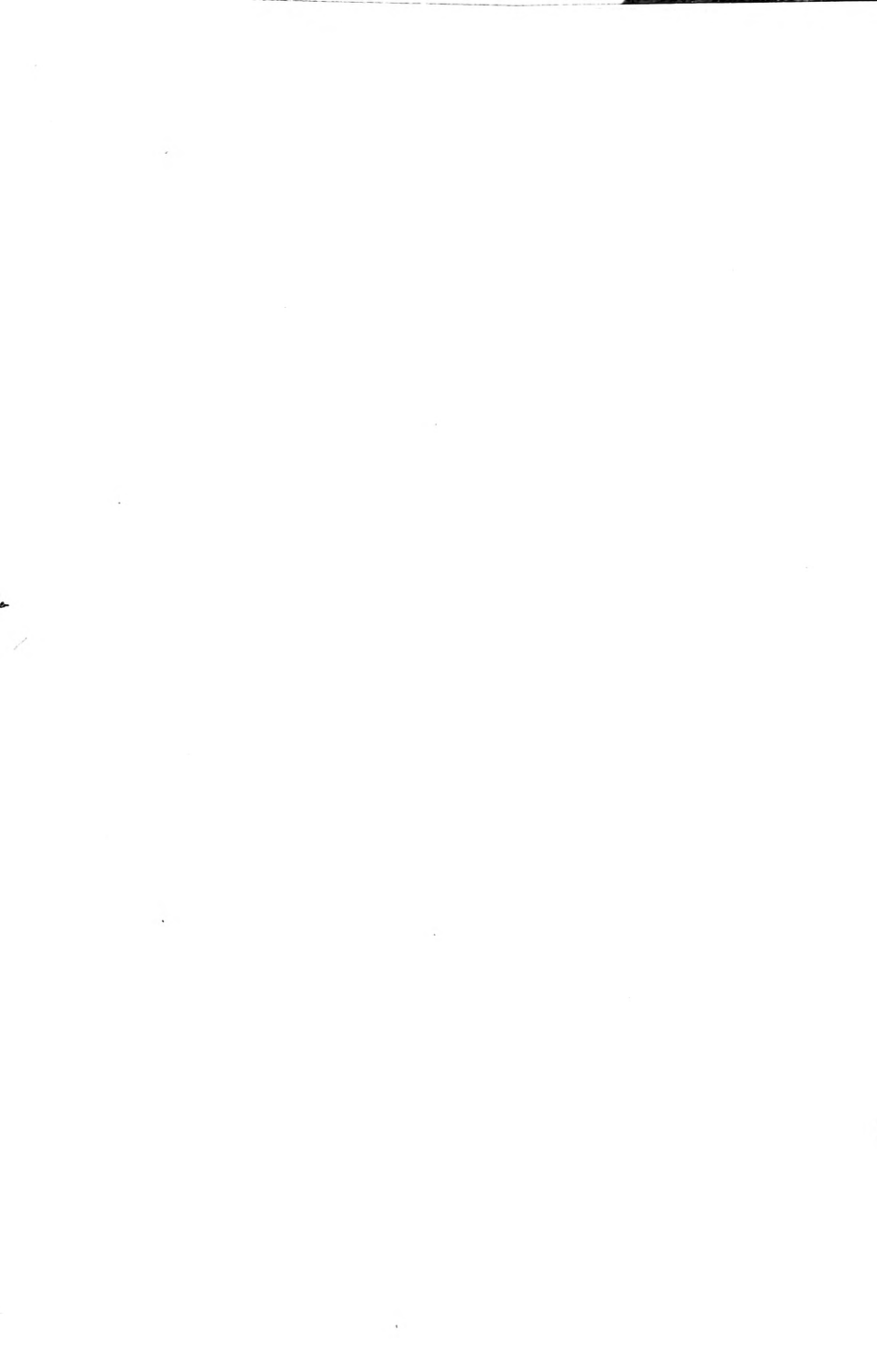
feat than to blot out a single feature of an utopian dream. This is not the time for political castle-building. The reformer is yet a pioneer; and the forest must be cleared away before a city can be reared. There is a fatal fascination in the indulgence of those "airy nothings," which come to every one who contemplates the probable success of a darling scheme. The future stretches out before the delighted imagination in a succession of ever-brightening vistas. And with the mind intently fixed upon the object of its desire, the difficulties of achievement are lost sight of. The deserts vast and anthi-

ers wide" between the present and the future that the soul aspires to, are unthought of, until the all-wearied pilgrim sinks upon the burning sands, to mingle his ashes with their own.

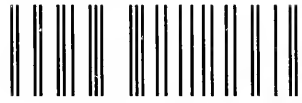
Let us not give way to the childish egotism that vents itself in petulant and unreasonable obstinacy when its whims are disregarded, or its caprices disappointed. The enemy is not before us, and it is rather premature to apportion his lands and chattels when victory is, perhaps, *as certainly his as ours.*

HEMPSTEAD, TEXAS, January,
15, 1896.





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